

Teaching English Literacy Cooperatively to Bilingual Children via Videoconferencing

Mary O'Sullivan
Doshisha Women's
University

Monica Rankin
Kinki University

Reference Data:

O'Sullivan, M., & Rankin, M. (2014). Teaching English literacy cooperatively to bilingual children via videoconferencing. In N. Sonda & A. Krause (Eds.), *JALT2013 Conference Proceedings*. Tokyo: JALT.

Parents of bilingual children who attend Japanese schools often struggle on their own in their efforts to develop and maintain native-level literacy in their children's L2. The authors live in different parts of Japan while raising their bicultural children. Videoconferencing over a yearlong period in 2012/2013 enabled their 6th-grade children to participate in an online classroom setting that the parents took turns teaching. The learners successfully completed 6th-grade *Language Arts* and *Writing* workbooks of the McGraw-Hill *Spectrum* series and read six age-appropriate novels. This article is based on a yearlong case study and focuses on the following four aspects: (a) setting up the classroom with respect to goals, materials, and teachers' roles; (b) managing the lessons; (c) resources used including a sample lesson; and (d) a discussion of feedback from the participants and the challenges encountered.

日本の学校教育を受けているバイリンガルの子供の第二言語能力をネイティブレベルに引き上げるのは、その親一人だけの力では容易なことではない。そこで、当論文の著者（O' SullivanとRankin）は日本の別々の地域に住んでいるが、2012年から2013年の1年間、自分達の小学6年生のバイカルチャーの子供達に、ビデオ会議を利用して各々が交代でオンラインレッスンを行った。その結果、子供達は、McGraw-Hill『Spectrum』Seriesの6th grade『Language Arts』と『Writing』workbooksを修了し、6冊の年令に見合った小説本を読み終えることができた。ここに載せたのは、上記のオンラインレッスンの内容を、1) 教育目的、教材、教師の役割などの授業設定、2) 授業の管理、3) サンプルレッスンなどの教育資源（教材）、4) 子供達の反応から得た課題、の4点に着目して検討したものである。

FOR MANY years there has been a common misbelief that learning and speaking a second language can have a negative impact on and be detrimental to success in the majority language (Eisenclas, Schalley, & Guillemine, 2013). Even today, many Japanese educators are wary of second languages and view them as an interference to learning Japanese. This was evidenced by the fact that until 2010, English as an academic subject was only taught starting in junior high school in the Japanese school system. However, recent academic research (Barac & Bialystok, 2011; Cummins, 1999, 2000; Makin, Campbell, & Jones Diaz, 1995; Swain, Lapkin, Rowen, & Hart, 1990; Thomas & Collier, 1997) has asserted that children with a strong foundation in the home minority language will actually achieve higher proficiency in the majority language. Furthermore, according to Cummins' *Interdependence Theory* (1976) and the *Concept of Common Underlying Proficiency* (1979), the home language and the majority language are interdependent. Cummins strongly recommends that communities together with parents take a bigger responsibility in developing L2 literacy. Some parents of bilingual chil-



dren in Japan have established their own L2 community-based literacy circles (Rankin, 2011). However, for families who do not have access to such a circle, using videoconferencing to connect with other parents and learners is a very practical and convenient option. In this report of a 1-year case study involving four learners and three parents, the authors will demonstrate how a group of foreign mothers living in Japan set up an online home-based language classroom to teach minority-language reading and writing skills to their children.

Thanks to the continually expanding reach of modern technology, the world we live in is becoming ever smaller and more easily accessible. As technology evolves, it will continue to provide more possibilities for communication, connection, and collaboration. Videoconferences, in particular, make it possible to engage students who are geographically separated from the teaching locale in meaningful and relevant ways (Rao, Eady, & Edelen-Smith, 2011). To give an example, in the first 6 months of 2010, more than 124 million people used Skype (the Internet video messaging service) to make 95 million calls, 40% of which were video calls (Melanson, 2010). Included in these numbers are the many language learners who are also now using Skype to improve their communication skills. One Japanese company, RareJob.com, uses Skype to provide online language lessons. According to Koh Otori, manager at that company, the company currently has around 200,000 Japan-based students who are studying English with teachers in the Philippines (personal email communication, 11 March, 2014). There have also been various studies detailing how educational institutions are using Skype in classrooms (Davis, 2006; Mirtschin, 2008; Waters, 2008). For students in remote communities who face many challenges to get an education, making use of videoconferencing in the classroom helps erase the distance between learners and teachers and brings the opportunity to learn to those who might not otherwise find it in their geographical location. This is especially true for indigenous and native peoples (Rao et

al., 2011). Although Skype could arguably be considered less sophisticated than other web or videoconferencing tools, it nevertheless incorporates some advanced features that make it useful for educational purposes, especially in the language classroom. The conference calling, instant messaging, file sharing, and screen sharing functions all make Skype particularly useful in a language-learning situation. For these reasons, Skype was chosen as the videoconferencing medium by the teachers in this study. There has been extensive research on the use of Skype in the business world and more recently on how to utilize this software in the classroom, but there have been no studies showing how parents can use Skype to teach their children collaboratively.

Online Literacy Classroom

The Learners

There were four 12-year-old girls in this study, E, L, and A, and one 11-year-old, M.

M lives in Wakayama but spent 10 years living in the U.S., where she attended a public elementary school for 4 years, while attending Japanese school on Saturdays. She moved to Japan in the middle of grade 5 and was enrolled in Japanese public school. Both of her parents are Japanese.

L was born and lives in Wakayama. She has a Canadian mother and a Japanese father. At the time of the study, she was attending Japanese public elementary school.

E was born and lives in Wakayama. She has an American mother and a Japanese father who was educated in the U.S. and moved to Japan when he was 30 years old. E also was attending public elementary school.

A was born and lives in Kyoto with an Irish mother and a Japanese father. She was also attending Japanese public school;

when she was in the 5th grade, she studied in Ireland for 4 months.

An indication of the learners' English literacy level can be ascertained by the fact that in 2012, just before the case study began, all learners successfully passed *Pre Level 1* of the *Japanese Eiken Step Test*. This corresponds to a score of 550 in TOEFL (Eiken Foundation of Japan, 2014). They also had completed the *Spectrum Grade 5 Writing* and *Language Arts* workbooks (<http://www.carsondellosa.com/>).

The Teachers

There were three mothers who taught cooperatively during the study.

E's mother, B, has a fine arts background and is teaching English part-time at elementary schools in Wakayama City. She recognizes the benefits of being biliterate. However, due to a lack of home support (see Rankin, 2011) and because she is not a trained teacher, she often expressed her appreciation of being involved in a cooperative literacy group.

A's mother, O'Sullivan (author 1), has a background in education and teaches English at Doshisha Women's University in Kyoto. She has been actively teaching English literacy to her two children on her own, at home, for more than 10 years.

The third teacher, L's mother, Rankin (author 2), also has an education background and is teaching English at Kinki University in Wakayama. In 2001, she set up the first-ever English literacy group in Wakayama called Wakayama Bilinguals.

Reasons for Creating Online Classroom

Teaching one's own children L2 literacy is both rewarding and challenging. It can often be exasperating when they would prefer not to do the lessons. Moreover, as most children are highly

engaged with regular school homework and activities, finding time for English study is not easy. English study can also feel like an extra burden, as peers are not required to do it. Furthermore, it becomes progressively harder as the child grows older and begins to rebel.

O'Sullivan's daughter A, having spent a semester in Ireland during 5th grade attending the local school, had returned to Japan speaking much more fluently, reading more, and writing at a higher level than she previously could. Her mother was keen for her to build on this improvement but she needed a more motivating environment than the one-to-one learning they had been doing. O'Sullivan needed to quickly find a support system.

Rankin, who had been involved in a cooperative English literacy circle in Wakayama, invited A to join her study group of similar-aged learners via Skype. Rankin and one other foreign mother were involved in teaching their two daughters, L and E, along with M, a Japanese girl who had attended public school in the United States and returned to Japan in the 5th grade. For the reasons listed above, O'Sullivan decided to join the group, starting in April of 2012, when all the learners began 6th grade of elementary school. O'Sullivan felt that it was difficult to motivate her daughter to study with her. Moreover, as A was about to enter adolescence, it was important for her to have a peer group she could identify with. Furthermore, A and L had been friends since childhood, and it would be a good way for them to stay in touch. From Rankin's and B's point of view, A was a hard worker and having an extra hardworking learner could be motivating for their group. Another important factor was that more parents assisting in teaching, each with her own distinct approach, would bring a richness of ideas and materials to the class and benefit all the students. In fact, DuFour (2004) stressed that teacher collaboration leads to higher levels of student achievement. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, cooperative teaching would ease the work burden for all teachers. A

would also be more motivated to do her assignments if they were for other teachers, rather than for her own mother. This is the basis upon which Skype as an online teaching and learning tool was used.

Creating a Videoconferencing Classroom

Setting up the Skype classroom required the parents to set classroom goals, choose teaching materials, and agree on the roles of the teacher.

First, the parents of the four learners agreed on three goals for the group:

1. to develop and maintain the learners' English literacy skills focusing on 6th grade writing and reading skills, using authentic materials;
2. to provide a motivating study environment in a home setting; and
3. to establish a social gathering for the learners in which their cultural backgrounds would be respected and celebrated.

Second, with regard to the teaching materials, the resources used in the classes would vary from teacher to teacher. However, the teachers agreed to teach novel-centered lessons in conjunction with workbooks and supplementary materials. In addition to the workbooks, which were bought in April when the new Japanese school year began, the teachers purchased further teaching resources when necessary throughout the year.

The third facet of setting up the online classroom was agreeing on the role of the teacher. The group utilized a cooperative teaching style with one parent from each family teaching 12 weekly lessons throughout the year. Once the teaching schedule was set, there were four responsibilities for the teacher:

1. to choose a novel and notify the parents in a timely manner so that all the learners would have the novel in time for the first lesson;
2. to plan, prepare, and teach 12 lessons (including copying, scanning, and emailing the supplementary materials to each learner);
3. to mark all assigned homework; and
4. to update the blog with homework assignments.

The homework assignments were posted weekly on a blog (<http://wakayamabilinguals.blogspot.jp/>), keeping everyone involved. This was especially important for M's parents, who were not involved in teaching. In addition, a separate hardcopy of the homework was given to the students and posted by mail to the learners who were not in the same physical location as the teacher, which enabled them to do their assignments without having to access the blog. They did not have to wait for the teacher to update the blog, nor were they delayed when they did not have access to a printer.

Managing the Lessons

The literacy group followed the Japanese school year; the online classes began in April and finished in early March. In order to keep the teaching load even and spread out the teaching time, each of the three teachers agreed to teach twice, one long unit of eight lessons and another shorter unit of four lessons.

To begin with, all families had to decide on a day when the learners would be free with no after-school activities and also when the three mothers would be available to teach. Tuesday afternoon at 4:30 was the decided time. Before the lesson, teacher and learners ensured that the room was ready with the computer in place so all class members and the teacher could see each other.

When one of the learners made a presentation or speech, the camera usually focused on only this student. In order that A, as the lone distant learner, could feel more a part of the group, O'Sullivan found it to be especially important for the learners to do pair work activities, including reading diary entries to each other, checking the answers to vocabulary quizzes, and reading poems to one another.

Sometimes the teachers employed Skype screen sharing so that all of the class members could watch one computer screen simultaneously. This was useful if, for example, the class was watching a YouTube video.

Teaching Resources

Three kinds of teaching resources were utilized in the Skype lessons: workbooks, novels, and supplementary materials. Using workbooks reduced the amount of planning time and created stability, giving both the teachers and learners a sense of continuity and accomplishment. For these reasons, a language arts workbook and a writing workbook were implemented as components of the curriculum and the learners received weekly homework from the workbooks. Both workbooks were from the McGraw Hill *Spectrum Series* (<http://www.mheducation.com/divisions/prek-12>) and served the following specific purposes.

1. The fundamentals of grammar and sentence structure were covered in the language arts book.
2. The writing workbook taught 6th-grade level writing skills.

Daniels (2002) found that literature circles were the key, not just to get students interested in reading but also to improve their scores on standardized tests. Consequently, in order to ensure that the students read regularly, the teachers agreed to make the novel study the center of the lessons.

The teacher scheduled to teach chose the novel for each unit by consulting grade 6 required reading lists and book reviews. For teaching novels, literature units are available for many books and can be readily purchased. These units or study guides can be helpful for parents who have a limited teaching background. In addition, there are hundreds of free teaching resources for many novels available online. The following novels were selected for use during the year: *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *Under the Hawthorn Tree*, *Black Beauty*, *Chicken Soup for the Girl's Soul*, and *Phantom of the Tollbooth*.

As well as English language arts, a wide range of topics and subject matter including art, social studies, and science were taught. This necessitated extensive supplementary materials and the teachers had particular success with the following resources: cursive writing workbooks, poetry textbooks, PowerPoint software, typing websites, spelling websites, poster presentation materials, TED Talks (<http://www.ted.com/>; videos of short presentations given at the Technology, Entertainment, Design Conference), Toastmasters materials (<http://www.toastmasters.org/>), YouTube videos (<https://www.youtube.com/>), and magazines such as *Highlights* (<http://www.highlightskids.com/>), *Discovery Girls* (<http://www.discoverygirls.com/>), and *National Geographic Kids* (<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/>). There are few authentic English resource materials available in stores in Japan, so the teachers bought many books and resources online at either Amazon.co.jp or Book Depository.com or brought them back from overseas. Occasionally, they found materials on the following sites in Japan: Tell and Sell Japan (<http://tellandselljapan.wordpress.com/>), Gaijinpot Classifieds (<http://classifieds.gaijinpot.com/>), and Education in Japan (<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/EDN-IN-JPN/info>). For the complete list of resources, see the e-handout from the JALT2013 presentation on the blog entry (http://wakayamabilinguals.blogspot.jp/2013_10_01_archive.html).

Sample Lesson

Lessons averaged 90 minutes and were divided into three sections. Class began with a warm-up activity to promote conversation and to ensure that A felt like she was in the room with the other three learners. Such activities included making mini-speeches, for which learners were presented with a topic, were given 30 seconds to prepare, and then spoke for 1 minute, followed by questions from each listener.

The second part of the lesson focused primarily on the novel and involved animated discussion. In his book, Daniels (2002) stated that The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association highly recommend collaborative reading classrooms where students take responsibility for and discuss their reading. Accordingly, this section of the lesson was organized like a reading circle, in which the students took turns chairing the discussions. It was during this time that the learners also shared their homework assignments from the novel, sometimes as a group but often in pair work either in person or with a Skype partner. Typical assignments were answering comprehension questions, reviewing vocabulary worksheets or spelling tests, and explaining sketches of scenes they had drawn based on the novel. Details of the homework assignments are posted on the blog (<http://wakayamabilinguals.blogspot.jp>).

The third part of the lesson focused on developing a specific skill which had been decided upon by the teacher at the beginning of the teaching block. Examples of such skills were making PowerPoint presentations, making speeches, doing Internet research projects, and writing poetry. These skills were developed in each lesson and often there was a final project specific to the skills. (See Appendix A for a sample lesson from *The Diary of Anne Frank* and Appendix B for a sample worksheet.)

Feedback From Learners

Purpose

In order to continue to teach literacy effectively and use materials to which the learners respond well, at the end of the case study, data was collected by carrying out oral interviews with the learners.

Method

The oral interviews were conducted via Skype in the final week of the case study. Learners and researchers were at their homes and each interview lasted approximately 15 minutes. The interview was based on four child-friendly questions that were written in English (see Appendix C). The data collecting process involved two steps. First, the questions were sent to the learners via email a week before the appointed interview day, to give them time to prepare. The learners were asked to underline their answers to the first three questions and write a short answer to the fourth question. Secondly, the oral interviews were conducted individually. To remain unbiased, the authors interviewed each other's child.

Results

The discussion of the interviews centered on four topics:

- the materials and resources that develop writing skills,
- the materials and resources that develop a love of reading,
- the most favored activities, and
- how an online classroom impacts language learning.

Developing Writing Skills

Learners in the oral interview were first asked to reflect on their learning and recommend activities that they regarded as helpful

to children their age who want to become better writers. Twenty regular literacy activities that were worked on during the year were listed and the learners were asked to recommend the five most effective activities. They did not have to rank their answers. The top three activities chosen by the four learners were journal writing, letter writing, and vocabulary learning exercises. Two learners said that poetry reading was very influential on their writing ability.

Love of Reading

Learners were then asked for recommendations on how to become a better reader. All of the learners recommended reading grade-level novels. There was substantial support for doing novel-related vocabulary exercises and discussing the novels. Interestingly, two of the learners declared that watching YouTube videos helped them to learn new vocabulary and phrases, which in turn, they said, was instrumental in making reading easier.

The Most Enjoyable Activities

When asked what they enjoyed most about the literacy class, the learners chose many different activities. However, all four of the learners selected reading the novels as an enjoyable activity. Other activities that were favorably mentioned were artwork, poetry (reading, writing, and reciting), making presentations, and technology-related activities.

Impact of Learning With Extra Members on Literacy

The focus of the final question regarded how learning with one or more extra members on Skype affected the development of their English literacy skills. All four responded differently to this question. E stated that while having A (the lone dis-

talanced learner) in the class was a good experience, the technical problems in the online classroom sometimes got in the way of learning. A herself, although stating that learning with the other learners did not actually impact her literacy skills, commented that she did not want to be seen as the only one who was not trying. This response would strongly indicate that, in fact, she was positively motivated by peer pressure from the other three learners.

Teachers' Observations

When the oral interviews were completed and the data were collected, the authors made the following observations. Overall, the learners expressed their enjoyment of the classes and reported that the teaching resources used in the lessons positively affected their literacy skills. Specifically, all learners highly evaluated the novels and the use of technology in the lessons. Four of the six novels studied in the lessons, *Black Beauty*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Under The Hawthorn Tree* were about earlier times in history. In contrast to this, all the learners reported that using modern technology in the lessons made their learning fun and exciting. The lessons involved activities in which the learners had the opportunity to use a computer to research and make PowerPoint presentations, watch and summarize TED Talks, learn touch typing, and perform poetry recitations. Throughout the yearlong study, the teachers were constantly impressed with the commitment and hard work of the learners.

Challenges Encountered

Various challenges were experienced during the year in the home-based videoconferencing classroom. Initially, a major problem was a poor Internet connection that slowed the pace of the class. There were times when Skype froze and members had

to quit the application and sign in again, all of which took time, making it difficult to get back to and refocus on the lesson. The teachers realized that in one of the homes, the Internet worked better in a different room, and, therefore, that room then became the classroom. The learning was not disturbed by technical problems after this change was made.

Another difficulty experienced was that as the classroom was based in a home, on occasion there were distractions, such as other family members moving around in the background. In order to ensure that the learners could study with fewer interruptions, family members had to be made aware of the schedule in advance and asked to cooperate, making the environment more supportive.

A further challenge was that it was difficult for teachers to check that the learner(s) in the other cyber classroom had the required study materials and textbooks. Rankin and O'Sullivan realized that it was necessary for the teacher to go online a few minutes beforehand and briefly check that all the learners had all the necessary materials.

Yet another difficulty was that it was impossible to check the homework of the learners who were not physically in the classroom. This of course also meant that A's homework was only checked by her own mother. Later in the course of the year, after the learners had improved their typing skills, some of the writing exercises were completed on the computer. This allowed all the teachers to have access to homework done by all the students.

Another problem was that, at times, it was somewhat lonely and isolating for A, due to her being the lone student in her physical environment. As a result, she could not partake in the social time with the other learners at the beginning and end of each class. This type of interaction makes learning more fun as, though the class and homework may be hard, learners can look forward to social time before and afterwards. Due to this, finding opportunities for pair work is especially important for

a lone student. During the lessons, O'Sullivan found it was a good idea to sometimes separate the participants, sending one pair to another area to work on a task while A worked with the third learner on Skype without distraction or interruption.

Conclusion

Research has shown that minority language proficiency has a very positive impact on academic achievement in the majority language. Therefore, in the future, the authors are interested in examining the correlations between proficiency levels of these four learners in both Japanese and English, considering that the written languages are so completely different.

This case study was limited to four families who worked collaboratively to support their children's home language literacy over the course of one year using an online classroom. This kind of online classroom is most appropriate for families who want to support literacy in the minority language but lack support due to financial or geographical circumstances and time constraints. While organizing such an online literacy classroom requires time and energy on the part of the families, the benefits have proven to be substantial. Rankin and O'Sullivan strongly recommend that more families take up this challenge. The opportunities for many more families to set up similar videoconferencing collaborative literacy circles are endless.

Bio Data

Monica Rankin is originally from English-speaking Canada. She teaches at Kinki University Faculty of Science and Technology where she is especially interested in developing the ER program and providing support to girls in STEM. Her research areas include bilingualism with a special focus on developing minority language writing skills. She runs the Wakayama Bilingual Literacy Group. <mraink@gaia.eonet.ne.jp>

Mary O'Sullivan, originally from Ireland, is bilingual in English and Gaelic. Having worked in Spain for 4 years, she also speaks Spanish. Her research interests include bilingualism and extensive reading. She is a lecturer in the International Affairs Department in Doshisha Women's University, where she is involved in teaching TOEFL iBT to students who go on to study abroad. <natsull@venus.sannet.ne.jp>

Acknowledgements

A special thanks to the four students who worked hard each week for the duration of the year.

References

- Barac, R., & Bialystok, E. (2011). Cognitive development of bilingual children. *Language Teaching*, 44, 36-54.
- Eiken Foundation of Japan. (2014). Comparison table. Retrieved 6 March, 2014 from <http://stepeiken.org/comparison-table>
- Cummins, J. (1976). The influence of bilingualism on cognitive growth: A synthesis of research findings and explanatory hypotheses. *Working Papers on Bilingualism: Language and Cognition*, 9, 1-43.
- Cummins, J. (1979). Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research*, 49, 222-251.
- Cummins, J. (1999). Alternative paradigms in bilingual education research: Does theory have a place? *Educational Researcher*, 28, 26-41.
- Cummins, J. (2000). Academic language learning, transformative pedagogy, and information technology: Toward a critical balance. *TESOL Quarterly*, 34, 537-548.
- Daniels, H. (2002). *Literature circles: Voice and choice in book clubs and reading groups*. Portland, OR: Stenhouse Publishers.
- Davis, V. A. (2006). Using Skype in the Classroom (or just learning how to use it!) [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://coolcatteacher.blogspot.com/2006/10/using-skype-in-classroom-or-just.html>
- DuFour, R. (2004). Schools as learning communities. *Educational Leadership*, 61(8), 6-11.
- Eisenclas, S. A., Schalley, A. C., & Guillemin, D. (2013). The importance of literacy in the home language: The view from Australia. *SAGE Open*, 3(4), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2158244013507270>
- Makin, L., Campbell, J., & Jones Diaz, C. (1995). *One childhood, many languages: Guidelines for early childhood education in Australia*. Pymble, Australia: Harper Educational.
- Melanson, M. (2010). Skype files for Initial public offering [Blog post]. Retrieved from http://www.readwriteweb.com/archives/skype_files_for_initial_public_offering_1.php?utm_source=AnaLuciaNovak&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+readwriteweb+%28ReadWriteWeb%29
- Mirtschin, A. (2008). Using Skype in the classroom [Blog post]. *On an e-Journey with Generation Y*. Retrieved from <http://murcha.wordpress.com/2008/12/06/using-skype-in-education/>
- Rankin, M. (2011). Writing in the minority language at home in Japan. In A. Stewart (Ed.), *JALT2010 Conference Proceedings* (pp. 781-792). Tokyo: JALT.
- Rao, K., Eady, M., & Edelen-Smith, P. (2011). Creating virtual classrooms for rural and remote communities. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 92(6), 22-27.
- Swain, M., Lapkin, S., Rowen, N., & Hart, D. (1990). The role of mother tongue literacy in third language learning. *Language, culture and curriculum*, 3(1), 65-81.
- Thomas, W. P., & Collier, V. (1997). School effectiveness for language minority students. *NCBE Resource Collection Series*, No. 9. Washington, D.C.: NCBE.
- Waters, S. (2008). Quick start tips for new Skype users [Blog post]. Retrieved from <http://thedublogger.com/2008/12/16/quick-start-tips-for-new-skype-users/>

Appendix A

Sample Lesson: 8-Week Unit

Textbooks and Reference Materials

- Writing Workbook
- Language Arts Workbook
- *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*

Warm-up Activity

- Journal reading

Novel Study

- *Anne Frank: Diary of a Young Girl* teaching Unit (http://www.coreknowledge.org/mimik/mimik_uploads/lesson_plans/1462/7_AnneFrankTheDiaryofaYoungGirl.pdf)
- Holocaust Studies Unit
- Class Notebook (<http://www.palmbeachschools.org/multi-cultural/documents/AnneFrank.pdf>)
- Anti-Jewish Decrees Worksheet (see Appendix B)
- Dictionary for each student

Speech Skills

- More Minute Monologues for Kids
- Summer Vacation Monologue No.1 (copies for each student)

Homework Check

- Writing Workbook
- Language Arts Workbook
- Students' Notebooks

Main Objectives

1. To understand how Nazi policy affected Jewish life.
2. To identify with Anne Frank as someone of similar age and concerns.

Lesson Plan

1. Warm-Up Activity: Journal Sharing - 10 minutes

In this 8-week unit, their weekly homework assignments included writing five journal entries and sharing some with the class.

The following topics were homework assignments last week:

- Being a teenager and what I want to experience
- My best friend[s]
- My relationship with one family member
- The space I live in
- A memory from my childhood
 - » a. Pair off the students. Have them choose and read one journal entry and tell the listener to ask two follow-up questions.
 - » b. Switch partners and choose a different entry to read. The listener will ask two follow-up questions.

2. Racism Discussion - 30 minutes

Write the following sentence on the white board and have one student read it aloud.

As a bicultural child and visual minority [returnee in M's case] living in an homogeneous society, how are you treated at school by your fellow classmates and teachers?

- a. Allow the students 10 minutes to write on this topic in their notebooks.

- b. In pairs, have them read what they wrote.
- c. Ask them what they think racism is. Give each student a dictionary to look up the meaning.
- d. Ask them if they have ever been treated in a racist way? Can they recall a time when they were ever racist?
- e. Complete the Anti-Jewish Decrees Worksheet together as a group (see Appendix B).

3. Homework Time - 20 minutes

Writing

The following was a written homework assignment from the previous week:

Explain a time when you have felt the way Anne did in her journal entry for Saturday 30 January 1943 – unable to please anyone.

Have them share their story with a partner.

Vocabulary

- For homework the students used vocabulary words 1 to 10 from this list in a sentence (<http://www.vocabulary.com/lists/24704#view=notes>)
- Have the learners take turns reading their sentences to the group, leaving out the vocabulary word. The other students guess the word.

4. Acting Skills - 15 minutes

- a. Watch this YouTube video on how to memorize and deliver a speech (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgpoY1-110U>).
- b. Have the learners make a list of the tips they remember.

- c. Hand out the first monologue, *Summer Vacation*, and give the students 2 minutes to practice the first two lines.
- d. Each student reads the title and the first two lines to the class.

5. After the Lesson

Teacher checks workbooks. Social time for the students.

Appendix B

Diary of Anne Frank: Racism Worksheet

Match the decrees with the effects by drawing lines between the two columns.

Anti-Jewish Decrees	Effects on Jews
• bicycles confiscated	• restrict movements
• curfew at 8 pm	• identifiable
• attend Jewish schools only	• isolate
• excluded from movies, theaters	• isolate
• wear yellow star	• can't visit Christians
• banned from trams/trains	• inconvenient
• can't swim or engage in sports	• restrict movements isolate
• can't drive cars	• attend Jewish schools only
• can only use Jewish shops	• isolate
• shop 3 pm-5 pm only	• isolate

Appendix C

Questionnaire for Oral Interview

1. A 6th grader wants to become a better English writer. Which of the following would you recommend they do?

Underline 5 you have chosen

- Completing language arts workbook
- Completing writing workbook
- Writing in your journal
- Answer novel-related questions
- Completing novel-related creative writing questions
- YouTube videos
- PowerPoint presentations
- Artwork
- Poster presentations
- Speech making
- Vocabulary quizzes
- Spelling quizzes
- Diary writing
- Letter writing
- Learning new vocabulary
- Poetry recitation
- Poetry writing
- Listening and discussing TED talks
- Reading the 6 novels
- Class discussions about the novels

2. A 6th grader wants to enjoy reading books at his or her grade level. Which of the following would you recommend they do?

Underline 5 you have chosen

- Completing language arts workbook
- Completing writing workbook
- Writing in your journal
- Answer novel-related questions
- Completing novel-related creative writing questions
- YouTube videos
- PowerPoint presentations
- Artwork
- Poster presentations
- Speech making
- Vocabulary quizzes
- Spelling quizzes
- Diary writing
- Letter writing
- Learning new vocabulary
- Poetry recitation
- Poetry writing
- Listening and discussing TED talks
- Reading the 6 novels
- Class discussions about the novels

3. Which of the following activities did you enjoy the most?

Underline 5 you have chosen

- Completing language arts workbook
- Completing writing workbook
- Writing in your journal
- Answer novel-related questions
- Completing novel-related creative writing questions
- YouTube videos
- PowerPoint presentations
- Artwork
- Poster presentations
- Speech making
- Vocabulary quizzes
- Spelling quizzes
- Diary writing
- Letter writing
- Learning new vocabulary
- Poetry recitation
- Poetry writing
- Listening and discussing TED talks
- Reading the 6 novels
- Class discussions about the novels

4. [M, E, and L] Explain how learning with a fourth member [via Skype] affected your English literacy progress?

Write your answer

5. [A] Explain how learning with three other members [via Skype] affected your English literacy progress?

Write your answer
